

wage, which was \$2.15 an hour at the time. In September, the company settled the charges by paying \$1 million in back wages.

"That happened five years ago," Wu said through an interpreter. "It's not happening anymore."

Far from Saipan's luxury hotels are what the U.S. Interior Department calls "labor camps," home to 20,000 Asian workers. The fortunate ones get dormitories with bunk beds and communal bathrooms. Others find themselves consigned to squalid shacks without running water, sufficient toilets or proper ventilation.

Young Chinese women spend their days hunched over sewing machines under fluorescent lights. The hours are long and the conditions sometimes harsh, but few complain. They are too deep in debt back home to risk getting fired.

Some Chinese men said they paid \$7,000 apiece for construction jobs, while Chinese seamstresses are charged from \$3,000 to \$4,000 each for passage here—often as much as they will earn in a year after paying taxes and fees for room and board. The money goes to Chinese government middlemen, who secure passports and arrange jobs.

Once here, guest workers are vulnerable to exploitation. Human-rights advocates say many guest workers endure unpaid work, forced overtime, withheld wages and unsafe workplaces.

A seamstress from southern China said she is forced to work seven days a week at Micronesian Garment Manufacturing Inc., one of the largest factories, with nearly 300 workers. Occasionally, she said, she can take a half-day off on Sunday to wash her clothes or write letters. Several workers said the garment factory, controlled by Hong Kong and mainland Chinese investors, would not grant overtime unless the women met their daily quotas. Typically, if a worker falls behind, she must reach her quota on her own time just to qualify for time-and-a-half overtime pay.

Steve Yim, a Hong Kong-based management consultant for Micronesian Garment Manufacturing Inc., confirmed that workers must meet their quotas before they can earn overtime but denied that women work for no pay in order to fill their daily quotas.

"I'm not aware of it," Yim said, adding that no one was forced to work overtime, "but if they are willing to work seven days, we don't prohibit them. We can't stop them."

Guest workers are reluctant to speak out, because they know their employers can send them packing with one day's notice.

"It's not a job market where if they don't like it, they can leave," said Gregoire, the human rights worker. "You're going to sit there and endure whatever you have to endure." Most workers from China are required to sign contracts with the Chinese government, vowing to obey the laws of the United States, Northern Mariana Islands—and China.

A two-year contract for one Chinese carpenter forbids him from engaging in "any political or religious activity." He cannot take drugs, watch "sex movies," fight, get drunk or "fall in love or get married." Some garment-industry executives say conditions are improving as manufacturers become more attuned to American labor practices.

Eloy Inos, an executive with Tan Holdings Corp., the largest garment-maker on Saipan, said the garment factories help create ancillary work in shipping, insurance and other support services. He said some problems had been caused by Asian manufacturers' unfamiliarity with U.S. labor standards.

"They've since learned and have changed a lot, although at times the changes were painful," Inos said.

But restrictive labor practices persist in many garment factories here, despite limited reforms and continued pressure by human-rights groups. Recently, Chinese women were forbidden by their employer from attending a Christian church. The church's Korean pastor had to remind the South Korean factory manager that people in the United States are free to practice religion.

At another South Korean garment company—formerly S.R. Corp., now Coral Fashion Inc.—workers were told that they could leave their barracks only twice a week for one hour. Violators "will be barred from going out the barracks indefinitely," the company wrote in a notice posted on Feb. 6, 1997. The factory has since been warned by local officials that it is against the law in the United States to lock up one's workers.

FOOD CHECK-OUT DAY

HON. JON CHRISTENSEN

OF NEBRASKA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, February 11, 1998

Mr. CHRISTENSEN. Mr. Speaker, Monday, February 9th, was "Food Check-Out Day." "Food Check-Out Day" marks the day when most Americans have earned enough money to pay for all the food they will consume for the year. American families spend just 10.9 percent of their disposable income for food compared to 15 percent in France, 18 percent in Germany and 33 percent in Mexico.

Besides supplying the country with an affordable food supply, the American farmer provides jobs to workers off the farm. For each dollar spent on food in this country, only 23 cents goes to the farmer; 77 cents goes to food marketing, processing, retailing, generating thousands of jobs for American workers. In my State of Nebraska, 1 out of 4 jobs are tied to agriculture.

Mr. Speaker, I want to thank the farmers and ranchers from my State. Without their hard work and dedication to agriculture, the United States would not have the safest, let me reiterate the safest, and most affordable food supply in the world.

CHRISTA CARPENTER'S AWARD WINNING ESSAY

HON. MICHAEL BILIRAKIS

OF FLORIDA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, February 11, 1998

Mr. BILIRAKIS. Mr. Speaker, I would like to share the following essay with our colleagues. It was written by one of my constituents, Ms. Christa Carpenter, and won first place in the March for Life national essay contest commemorating the twenty-fifth anniversary of legalized abortion in the United States. I believe she presents a compelling argument in support of the sanctity of all human life.

WE MARCH ON FOR LIFE AND TRUTH

God's truth is eternal, absolute, universal, and impartial. It is our most powerful weapon in the battle to end abortion. During the past twenty-five years of the murdering of our brothers and sisters, His truth has been marching on in the pro-life movement.

Our Faith tells us that a pre-born baby, from the moment of fertilization, possesses a

soul, and is created in the image and likeness of God. Despite the physical condition of the baby, or the circumstances of conception, all are equal in the sight of God. Whether deformed, retarded, black or white, protectors of life must keep in mind that Christ's truth is without exception, and all pre-born babies possess the right to life. There are no exceptions, no compromises, when it comes to the life of ANY baby.

The Catholic Church proclaims that all men are "obliged to honor and bear witness to the truth". In fact, it is our duty to defend the pre-born. St. Thomas Aquinas states, "As a matter of honor, one man owes it to another to manifest the truth."

Abortion is a direct violation of the truth. The entire platform of the pro-abortion movement is based on lies. Their many statements such as "It's a woman's body"; "It's a blob of tissue"; "The mother's life is at stake" are attempts to justify the murder of a pre-born human being. Abortion can never be justified, for everyone knows in his conscience that it is wrong.

These remarks have been proven wrong by people who have LIVED Christ's truth. The most vivid example in my mind happened two years ago during my Mother's crisis pregnancy, when her water broke and she went into labor prematurely. The doctors refused to give her medical treatment to help save my twenty-week old pre-born brother, John Paul. They said my Mother would die if the pregnancy continued, and declared she should have the abortion for the "sake of the mother".

With the help of many friends, Mom was able to stay at home, never leaving her bed for ninety-three days. Our family endured many trials to keep my brother alive. We were rewarded when he was delivered at thirty-three weeks, for this was long after the time the doctors said he would be dead. He lived twenty-three hours, and received Baptism and Confirmation before he went "straight to Heaven". Many in the world took our experience for a failure, but we take comfort in the fact that John Paul is a saint, and sees God "face to face". Thanks to the truth we learned from those in the pro-life movement, we know Christ's truth. It conquered the lies of the pro-death world in the case of my Mother. She is living proof that the "life of the mother" exception is just an excuse to kill a baby.

Defenders of life, world-wide, have shown their commitment to the truth by sacrificing their time and comfort for the abolition of the Massacre of the Innocents. Actively they protest at abortion clinics, and present the pro-life message at every opportunity: on television, in newspapers, on radio, and in schools.

More often than not, we never see the "fruits" of our endeavors. Some say our efforts in the pro-life movement will never be able to stop the mass murder of children throughout the world. Yet, whether representatives of His truth are the majority or the minority; whether abortion increases or stops entirely; whether we have no political support or have the help of the entire government; His TRUTH will perpetually reign supreme. When it comes to the life of a baby, all know that a baby is a child created in the image and likeness of God, and abortion is the murder of that precious infant.

This battle may ensue for our lifetime or for the next generation to come, but His truth will ultimately "set us free" from the evil of abortion. Advocates of life, take heart: for as His truth is marching on, our God is marching with us.